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"What do you do here?" inquired Hans, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise.

"Well, I have no business here, I admit," replied Karl, his voice expressing the same feelings as his countenance; "but I dreamt last night that uncle Gottfried's will was under a stone in this kitchen, and I stole in to look; but, before I could do so, I heard these young people approaching, and not liking to be caught where I had no business, I got into the chest."

"Well, now take yourself off," said Hans. "There can never be any friendship between us, for I cannot trust you; so let me see your back."

Karl sneaked out of the house, and Peter was about to follow, after wishing his master and Gertrude good night, when Hans bade him stay a moment, and desired his daughter to go to bed.

"Peter," said he, after a pause, "you and Gertrude are more together than I should like, if I did not believe you to be a sober and industrious lad. I suppose there has been some love-making between you?"

"Master," said the young peasant, with the earnestness of sincerity, "I love Miss Gertrude as if she were a part of my life, and have thought of her and dreamt of her from the first moment I saw her."

"Well, work for me a year longer, and we will then talk further about the matter," said Hans. "My daughter is very young, and you are young enough to wait that time; if Gertrude is willing to accept you as her husband in a year's time, she shall be yours."

"Master, you have made me the happiest lad in the village," returned Peter; "and I am sure Gertrude will be as happy as I am, when she knows what you have promised."

With that he went home, and Hans secured the door very carefully.

About a fortnight afterwards, the village notary called upon the farmer, and informed him that Karl had again dreamt that his uncle had deposited his will under a certain stone in the kitchen floor, and, for his satisfaction, wished to make an examination. Hans made no objection; and a loose stone was found near the fireplace, which, being raised, disclosed to view a folded paper. The notary eagerly picked it up, and on opening it found that it was really a will, bearing the signature of Gottfried, and bequeathing the farm, with all the live and dead stock, to his nephew, Karl Landermann. The notary carried off the document, and legal proceedings were immediately commenced to recover possession of the property, under the so strangely-discovered will. Hans, in his perplexity, had recourse to the counsel of a shrewd lawyer, who, after hearing all the circumstances, procured a copy of the will and perused it attentively, but could gather no hope from it, the intentions of the deceased being so clearly expressed. Still he advised Hans to keep possession, and let the cause go for trial; nothing being, he said, so uncertain as the issue of a trial at civil law. On the trial he had an opportunity of examining the original document, and, on holding it up to the light, discovered that the water-mark was of more recent date than that of the writing, which was so clear an internal proof of forgery, that Karl's advocate immediately threw up his brief. Karl fled the country when he found that his villany was discovered, and Hans and his daughter were left in undisturbed possession of the farm. Gertrude, at the end of the year, became the wife of Peter Mitzer, who justified, by his exemplary conduct as a husband and father, the good opinion which Hans had formed of him at first.

THE BOOK TRADE IN GERMANY.

As Frankfort monopolises the trade in wine, so Leipzig monopolises the trade in books. It is here that every German author (and in no country are authors so numerous) wishes to produce the children of his brain, and that, too, only during the Easter fair. He will submit to any degree of exertion, that his work may be ready for publication by that important season, when the whole brotherhood is in labour, from the Rhine to the Vistula. Whatever the period of gestation may be, the time when he shall come to the birth is fixed by the almanack. If the auspicious moment pass away, he willingly bears his burden twelve months longer, till the next advent of the bibliopoli Lucina. This periodical littering at

Leipzig does not at all arise, as is sometimes supposed, from all or most of the books being printed there; Leipzig has only its own proportion of printers and publishers. It arises from the manner in which this branch of trade is carried on in Germany. Every bookseller of any eminence, throughout the Confederation, has an agent or commissioner in Leipzig. If he wishes to procure works which have been published by another, he does not address himself directly to the publisher, but to his own commissioner in Leipzig. The latter, again, whether he be ordered to transmit to another books published by his principal, or to procure for his principal books published by another, instead of dealing directly with the person from whom he is to purchase, or to whom he is to sell, treats only with his Leipzig agent. The order is received by the publisher, and the books by the purchaser, at third hand. The whole book trade of Germany thus centres in Leipzig. Wherever books may be printed, it is there they must be bought; it is there that the trade is supplied. Such an arrangement, though it employ four persons in every transaction instead of two, is plainly an advantageous arrangement for Leipzig; but the very fact that it has subsisted two hundred years, and still flourishes, seems to prove that it is likewise found to be beneficial to the trade in general. Abuses in public institutions may endure for centuries; but inconvenient arrangements in trade, which affect the credit side of a man's balance-sheet at the end of the year, are seldom so long-lived, and German booksellers are not less attentive to profit than any other honest men in an honest business.

Till the middle of the sixteenth century, publishers, in the proper sense of the word, were unknown. John Otto, born at Nürnberg, in 1510, is said to be the earliest on record who made bargains for copyright, without being himself a printer. Some years afterwards, two regular dealers in the same department settled in Leipzig, where the university, already in high fame, had produced a demand for books, from the moment the art of printing wandered up from the Rhine. Before the end of the century, the book-fair was established. It prospered so rapidly, that in 1600 the Easter Catalogue, which has been annually continued ever since, was printed for the first time. It now presents, every year, in a thick octavo volume, a collection of new books and new editions, to which there is no parallel in Europe. The writing public is out of all proportion too large for the reading public of Germany. At the fair, all the brethren of the trade flock together in Leipzig, not only from every part of Germany, but from every European country where German books are sold, to settle accounts, and examine the harvest of the year. The number always amounts to several hundreds, and they have built an exchange for themselves.

Yet a German publisher has less chances of making great profits, and a German author has fewer prospects of turning his manuscript to good account, than the same classes of persons in any other country that knows the value of intellectual labour. There is a pest called *Nachdruckeret*, or reprinting, which gnaws on the vitals of the poor author, and paralyses the most enterprising publisher. Each state of the Confederation has its own law of copyright, and an author is secured against piracy only in the state where he prints. But he writes for all, and they all speak the same language. If the book be worth anything, it is immediately reprinted in some neighbouring state, and, as the pirate pays nothing for copyright, he can obviously afford to undersell the original publisher. Wirtemberg, though she can boast of possessing, in Cotta, one of the most honourable and enterprising publishers of Germany, is peculiarly notorious as a nest for these birds of prey. The worst of it is, that authors of reputation are precisely those to whom the system is most fatal. The reprinter meddles with nothing except what he already knows will find buyers. The rights of unsaleable books are scrupulously observed; the honest publisher is never disturbed in his losing speculations; but, when he has been fortunate enough to become master of a work of genius or utility, the piratical publisher is instantly in his way. All the states do not deserve to be equally involved in this censure; Prussia, we believe, has shown herself liberal in protecting the rights of every German publisher. Such a system almost annihilates the value of literary labour, and occasions the unpleasant exterior of German printing, the coarse paper, and the worn-out type.